

WEEKLY DENTAL UPDATE



SPECIAL EDITION

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PASSING OF RDML RODRIGO CUAUHTEMOC MELENDEZ, DC, USN

Fellow Dental Corps Officers, it is with deep regret that I inform you of the passing of RDML Rodrigo "Rod" Cuauhtemoc Melendez, DC, USN (retired) on, or about, 5 Jan 2018 at his home in San Diego.

RDML Rodrigo Cuauhtemoc Melendez, was born on October 23, 1943 in Los Angeles, California to mother Helen Antoinette (Huhn) Melendez and father, Jose Cuauhtemoc Melendez (aka Bill Melendez), the renowned Charlie Brown/Peanuts cartoonist.

RDML Melendez grew up in Hollywood, California, attended Hollywood High School and eventually went on to achieve a bachelor of science in Oral Biology from the University of Southern California, 1966; a doctoral degree in dental surgery from the University of Southern California, 1968; and a master of science degree from George Washington University, 1975. RDML Melendez completed his specialty training in prosthodontics at the National Naval Dental School, and was a Fellow of the American and International College of Dentists in addition to being a member of the American Dental Association and the American College of Prosthodontics.



RDML Melendez was commissioned as an Ensign through the Navy Dental Corps' Early Commissioning program in 1965. His subsequent assignments were many: Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan; Assistant Dental Officer, USS Sanctuary (AH-17), Alameda, CA; Resident, Prosthodontics, National Naval Dental Center, Bethesda, MD; Head, Prosthodontic Department, Naval Dental Clinic, Rota, Spain; Prosthodontist, Naval Training Center, San Diego, CA; Prosthodontist, Branch Dental Clinic, Miramar, CA; Prosthodontist, Naval Dental Clinic, Camp Pendleton, CA; Executive Officer, Naval Dental Clinic, Camp Pendleton, CA; Commanding Officer, Naval Dental Clinic, Yokosuka, Japan; Dental Division, BUMED, Washington, DC; Commanding Officer, Naval Dental Center San Diego, CA; Assistant Chief, Education and Training Division, BUMED, Washington, D.C.

The proudest achievement of RDML Melendez was the legacy he left behind and was said to be the personification of what it meant to be an officer and a gentleman. He has been quoted as saying, "I've trained a lot of people ... I still run into civilians and techs and docs that I've worked with, and they tell me how much they enjoyed working for me and the time they spent in service at the commands that I had oversight of ... I really think I fostered a very positive environment." Though retired from active duty service in 2002, RDML Melendez continued to contribute to the Navy community serving as the Executive Director of the Veterans Memorial Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego until 2014, and as the

Director of Exhibits and Programs, until his passing. His awards included two Legions of Merit, a Meritorious Service Medal, and a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held for RDML Melendez on Sat., 27 Jan 2018 at 1100 at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center (Balboa Park), 2115 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92101. Burial is pending.

GAYLE D. SHAFFER
RDML, DC, USN
Chief, Navy Dental Corps